

PRACTICE EXAM 21: EQAO GRADE 6 LANGUAGE SIMULATION (47 QUESTIONS)

READING SESSION A

Time: Approximately 35 minutes

Passage 1: "The Saturday Garden"

A short story by Yusra Holmberg-Achebe

The community garden was not what Téa had expected.

When her mother had signed her up to volunteer there on Saturday mornings — "It will be good for you, Téa, and they need help" — Téa had pictured rows of bright vegetables, friendly neighbours laughing in the sunshine, and someone showing her exactly what to do.

What she had not pictured was Ms. Korenblum.

Ms. Korenblum was the head gardener. She was a tall woman in her seventies, with short grey hair, sun-worn hands, and a pair of muddy rubber boots that she wore in all weather. On Téa's first Saturday morning, Ms. Korenblum had taken one look at her, handed her a small hand trowel, pointed at a corner of the garden, and said, "That patch. Pull the weeds. Not the parsley. Come find me when you are done."

Then Ms. Korenblum had walked away.

Téa, eleven years old, had stood in the corner of the garden for almost two minutes before she had crouched down.

She had not been entirely sure which plants were the weeds and which were the parsley.

By the end of that first morning, Téa had pulled — she counted later — eleven plants that were definitely weeds, three plants that were probably weeds, and one plant that, Ms. Korenblum told her gently as she walked past, was a small but promising young carrot top.

Téa had wanted to cry.

Ms. Korenblum had only nodded, picked up the carrot top, examined it for a moment, and said, "That happens. Next Saturday, ask me what something is before you pull it. That is all."

She had not seemed angry.

But Téa had not been sure whether to come back.

She had come back.

On the second Saturday, Ms. Korenblum had pointed at the same patch and said, "Same job. But ask if you are not sure."

Téa had asked. A lot.

She had crouched in the dirt and held up small green stems, one at a time, and Ms. Korenblum had walked over and squinted at them and said things like, "Weed," or "Not a weed — that is purslane, it is edible, leave it," or "That is mint. Mint is a weed in the wrong garden and a treasure in the right one. Leave it for now."

By the end of the second Saturday, Téa had pulled forty-two weeds and zero carrots.

On the third Saturday, Ms. Korenblum had introduced her to a small wooden compost bin behind the shed. She had shown Téa how to layer the compost — dry leaves, kitchen scraps, dry leaves, kitchen scraps — and how to turn it once a week with a long-handled fork. She had told Téa, when Téa asked, that the compost bin had been in that exact spot since 1987.

"Older than I am," Téa had said.

"By a lot," Ms. Korenblum had agreed.

On the fourth Saturday, Ms. Korenblum had handed Téa a small pair of pruning shears and walked her over to a row of tomato plants near the east fence. She had shown Téa which side stems to cut and which to leave. She had told Téa that the plant put more energy into the fruit when it was not also trying to grow extra leaves in every direction.

"How do you know which ones to cut?" Téa had asked.

"You learn the plant," Ms. Korenblum had said. "There is no other way."

On the fifth Saturday, Ms. Korenblum had been quieter than usual.

She had pointed at the tomato row, given Téa the pruning shears, and said, "You do this row. I will be in the herb bed."

Téa had stared at her.

"By myself?"

"By yourself."

"What if I prune the wrong stem?"

"Then you prune the wrong stem," Ms. Korenblum had said. "The plant will keep growing. So will you."

Then she had walked away.

Téa had crouched beside the first tomato plant in the row for almost a minute before she had touched anything. She had run through what Ms. Korenblum had shown her the week before. She had looked at the lowest branches. She had looked at the side stems that were growing where the main branch met

another branch. She had remembered Ms. Korenblum's words — "extra leaves in every direction" — and she had taken a small breath and made her first careful cut.

The stem fell into the soil.

The plant looked, to Téa's relief, exactly the same as before, except for one missing stem.

She had moved to the second plant. Then the third. Then the fourth.

By the time she had finished the row, Ms. Korenblum was standing at the end of it, leaning on her long-handled fork and watching.

Téa stood up.

"How did I do?" she asked.

Ms. Korenblum walked slowly down the row, examining each plant. She nodded at one. She paused at another. She picked up one of the small fallen stems and turned it in her hand. She walked back to where Téa was standing.

"You missed two side stems on the third plant," she said. "And the cut on the fifth plant was a little too high. Other than that, well done."

Téa exhaled. She had not realized she had been holding her breath.

"Thank you," she said.

"Téa," Ms. Korenblum said.

"Yes?"

"You are getting good at this."

Téa looked at Ms. Korenblum, surprised. In five weeks, this was the first time Ms. Korenblum had said anything like a compliment.

"Really?" Téa asked.

"Really," Ms. Korenblum said. "You ask the right questions. You remember what I tell you. You are careful. Those are the three things a gardener needs."

Téa did not know what to say.

She looked at the tomato plants. She looked at the small pile of stems she had cut. She looked at the weeds she had pulled on previous Saturdays — the ones she had pulled correctly, and the small carrot top from her first day.

Five weeks ago, she had not been able to tell a weed from a parsley plant.

Today, she had pruned an entire row of tomatoes by herself.

She had not become a gardener overnight.

But she had become, that Saturday morning, a person who could be trusted with a row of tomato plants. And that, she thought, was a kind of beginning.

1. Why does the author MOST LIKELY include Téa's IMAGINED picture of the garden — "bright vegetables, friendly neighbours laughing, someone showing her exactly what to do"?

- A. To show that Téa had never been to a community garden before that morning
- B. To set up the contrast between what Téa expected and what she actually found
- C. To suggest that the community garden was not as friendly as it should have been
- D. To prove that Téa's mother had been wrong to sign her up for volunteer work

2. Read this sentence from the passage:

"Then Ms. Korenblum had walked away."

What does this short sentence MOST LIKELY communicate about Ms. Korenblum?

- A. Ms. Korenblum was rude and did not want to spend any time with Téa
- B. Ms. Korenblum was in a hurry to get to another part of the garden quickly
- C. Ms. Korenblum expects Téa to begin the work without lengthy explanation
- D. Ms. Korenblum was annoyed that Téa had been signed up by her mother

3. What does Ms. Korenblum's reaction to the pulled carrot top reveal about her?

- A. She accepts that mistakes happen during learning and focuses on what to do next
- B. She is secretly very angry but is trying not to show her frustration to Téa
- C. She believes that volunteers should not be allowed to work in the garden alone
- D. She is hoping that Téa will not come back to the community garden the next Saturday

4. Read this part of the passage:

"That is mint. Mint is a weed in the wrong garden and a treasure in the right one."

What does this part of the passage MOST LIKELY suggest about Ms. Korenblum's view of gardening?

- A. Ms. Korenblum is hoping to remove all of the mint from the garden over the summer
- B. Ms. Korenblum believes that mint should be grown in every community garden

- C. Ms. Korenblum thinks that gardeners should always plant the same things every year
- D. Ms. Korenblum sees gardening as a craft that depends on context and judgement

5. Why does Ms. Korenblum tell Téa that the compost bin has been "in that exact spot since 1987"?

- A. To make Téa feel that her own contribution to the garden is too small to matter
- B. To show that the garden has a long history that Téa is now becoming part of
- C. To suggest that the bin will need to be replaced soon by a younger volunteer
- D. To prove that Ms. Korenblum has been the head gardener for many decades

6. When Ms. Korenblum says, "You learn the plant. There is no other way," what is she MOST LIKELY teaching Téa?

- A. Plants are usually labelled clearly in good community gardens to avoid confusion
- B. The best way to garden is to read as many gardening books as possible at home
- C. Real gardening knowledge comes from careful attention to each plant over time
- D. Téa should bring a small notebook to the garden every Saturday to record details

7. Why does Ms. Korenblum leave Téa ALONE with the tomato row on the fifth Saturday?

- A. Ms. Korenblum believes Téa is now ready to work without being supervised directly
- B. Ms. Korenblum is tired of explaining the same instructions to Téa every week
- C. Ms. Korenblum has other urgent work in the herb bed that cannot wait any longer
- D. Ms. Korenblum wants Téa to ruin the row so that Téa will learn how serious mistakes are

8. Read this part of the passage:

"You missed two side stems on the third plant. And the cut on the fifth plant was a little too high. Other than that, well done."

What does this part of the passage MOST LIKELY suggest about Ms. Korenblum's feedback?

- A. Ms. Korenblum is rarely honest with the volunteers she works with at the garden
- B. Ms. Korenblum thinks that Téa will probably not return to the garden after this Saturday
- C. Ms. Korenblum is reluctant to give Téa any kind of compliment about her gardening

Passage 2: "Small Things That Counted" — A List Poem

By Maren Achilles-Whitford

(A list poem — also called a catalogue poem — built from a series of short, related items that accumulate to make their own meaning.)

The things I learned this summer, in no particular order:

How to tell a weed from a parsley plant.

How to hold a hand trowel without bending my wrist.

The name purslane — and that you can eat it.

The fact that compost bins are layered, not stirred.

The phrase you learn the plant — which I will probably remember even when I have forgotten most other things from this summer.

How long a tomato plant takes to fruit.

That the gardener in charge does not have to smile at you for her to mean it when she says you did well.

The smell of soil after rain — which I had smelled before but had never paid attention to until now.

How to ask a question without feeling embarrassed.

How to wait for an answer.

How to admit, out loud, that I do not know something
and then learn what it is, and then know it.

These are not the things

I thought I would learn this summer.

But they are the things I learned.

I am keeping all of them.

11. What kind of poem is this called, based on its structure?

- A. An acrostic poem — a poem in which the first letters of each line spell a hidden word
- B. A ballad — a song-like poem that tells a long story with regular rhymes
- C. A haiku sequence — three connected poems built from a 5-7-5 syllable pattern
- D. A list poem — a poem built from a series of short items that accumulate together

12. What is the MAIN message of this poem?

- A. Small lessons learned over a summer can add up to something meaningful and worth keeping
- B. Children should always keep a written list of every new thing they learn each summer
- C. The most important things to learn during a summer are usually about plants and gardening
- D. Adults often teach children things that the children did not actually want to learn at first

13. Read these lines from the poem:

"How to admit, out loud, that I do not know something / and then learn what it is, and then know it."

What do these lines MOST LIKELY suggest about the speaker?

- A. The speaker has been criticized many times for not knowing the names of plants
- B. The speaker is hoping to become a teacher when she is older so she can answer questions
- C. The speaker has learned that admitting what you do not know is part of how you learn it
- D. The speaker is sorry that she has spent so much time asking questions during the summer

A full-grown male wood bison can weigh up to one thousand kilograms — roughly the weight of a small car. The species is the largest land mammal in North America.

A Near Disappearance

The decline of the wood bison began with the same pattern that affected many North American species in the 1800s — overhunting for meat and hides, combined with growing human pressure on the land. By the late nineteenth century, the species was on the edge of disappearing entirely.

In 1922, the Canadian government took an important step. It established Wood Buffalo National Park — a protected area in northern Alberta and the southern Northwest Territories that contained the last known wild wood bison population. At the time, only a few hundred wood bison were left in the park.

The protection helped. But the population remained small for decades.

Setbacks Along the Way

The recovery has not been simple.

In 1925, the Canadian government made a decision that scientists today consider a serious mistake. To increase the bison population in Wood Buffalo National Park, the government transported thousands of plains bison north from the prairies and released them into the park. The plains bison interbred with the smaller wood bison population — and also brought diseases, including tuberculosis and brucellosis, that the wood bison had no resistance to.

For decades afterward, biologists worked carefully to identify and protect smaller populations of pure wood bison — herds that had not interbred with the plains bison or been exposed to the diseases. These small, pure herds became the foundation of the modern recovery.

In 1957, a herd of about two hundred genetically pure wood bison was discovered in a remote area of Wood Buffalo National Park called the Nyarling River area. This discovery was a turning point. From these animals, biologists carefully built up new herds in protected locations.

The Recovery Takes Hold

Over the following decades, conservation biologists — working with the federal government, provincial governments, and many Indigenous communities — moved small founder herds of pure wood bison to several new locations across the species' historical range. New herds were established in the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary in the Northwest Territories, in northern Alberta, in northern British Columbia, in Yukon, and in Manitoba.

Each new herd was watched carefully. Some grew slowly. Some grew faster. By the early 2000s, the total wood bison population in Canada had passed five thousand animals. By recent counts, more than ten thousand wood bison live across the species' modern range — a remarkable recovery from the fewer than 250 animals that survived a century earlier.

In 2014, the wood bison's status was downlisted from threatened to special concern under Canadian law — a formal recognition that the species was no longer at immediate risk of extinction.

Indigenous Communities and the Bison

The wood bison recovery has always been closely connected to the Indigenous peoples of the boreal forest, including the Dene, Cree, and Inuvialuit nations whose territories overlap with the bison's historical range.

For these communities, the bison is not only an ecological presence but a cultural and traditional one. The return of the wood bison has meant the return of a relationship that had been disrupted for generations. Many Indigenous communities are now active partners in monitoring herd health, managing hunting carefully, and protecting bison habitat from new pressures like resource development.

A Recovery, Not a Finish

The wood bison is not entirely safe.

Disease — particularly the tuberculosis and brucellosis brought into the population in 1925 — still affects the largest herd in Wood Buffalo National Park. Climate change is altering the boreal forest. New roads and industrial activity continue to fragment habitat.

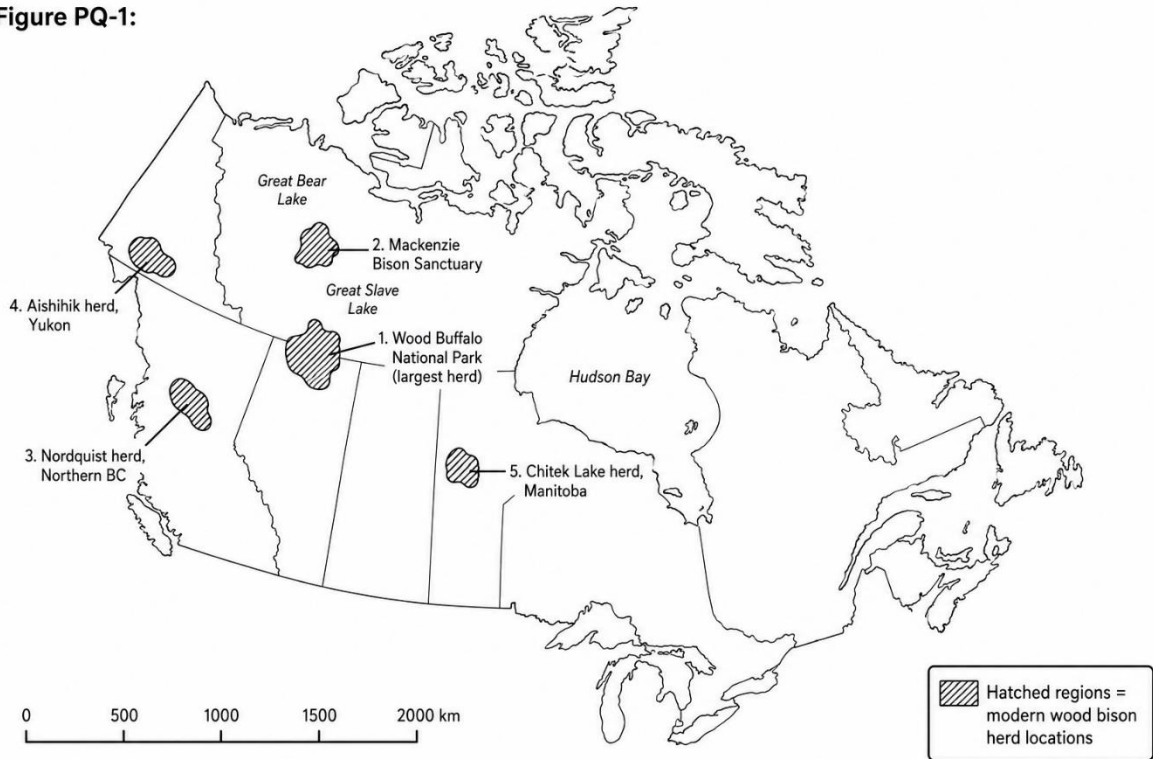
But the broader picture is one of remarkable recovery. A species that had fewer than 250 surviving members in 1900 now numbers more than ten thousand. The Indigenous communities whose ancestors lived alongside the wood bison are now central partners in the work of protecting it.

A great northern animal — the largest on the continent — has come back from the edge.

That, conservationists say, is what patient work over a hundred years can do.

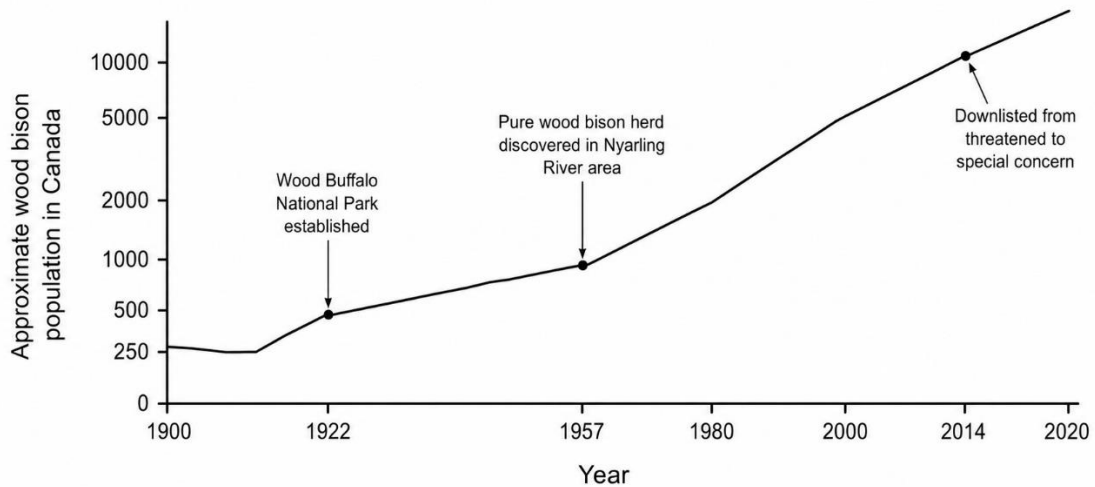
Graphic Text 1: Modern Wood Bison Range in Canada

Figure PQ-1:



Graphic Text 2: Wood Bison Population in Canada, 1900–2020

Figure PQ-2



Population estimates based on government and biologist surveys.

16. What is the MAIN purpose of this article?

A. To tell the story of how the wood bison has recovered from near extinction in Canada

- B. To compare the wood bison with the plains bison that live on the southern prairies
- C. To convince readers to visit Wood Buffalo National Park to see the wood bison
- D. To argue that Wood Buffalo National Park should be expanded to a much larger size

17. Why does the author MOST LIKELY mention that fewer than 250 wood bison remained anywhere in the world by 1900?

- A. To suggest that early Canadian scientists were not very good at counting large animals
- B. To prove that the wood bison was not actually as widespread as Indigenous peoples remembered
- C. To explain why the Canadian government decided to import bison from the United States
- D. To establish how close the species came to extinction, so the recovery feels more meaningful

18. According to the article, what was the FIRST important step in protecting the wood bison?

- A. The discovery of a herd of pure wood bison in the Nyarling River area of Alberta
- B. The 1922 establishment of Wood Buffalo National Park to protect the last wild population
- C. The transport of plains bison from the prairies north into Wood Buffalo National Park
- D. The 2014 downlisting of the species from threatened to special concern under Canadian law

19. Why does the article describe the 1925 decision to transport plains bison north as "a serious mistake"?

- A. The plains bison ate too much food and left the wood bison without enough to eat
- B. The plains bison did not survive the cold winters of the northern boreal forest area
- C. The plains bison interbred with the wood bison and brought serious diseases with them
- D. The plains bison were taken from the prairies, where they were also already endangered

20. Why was the 1957 discovery of a herd in the Nyarling River area considered "a turning point"?

- A. The discovered herd was a small group of genetically pure wood bison used to build new herds
- B. The discovery proved to scientists that the original recovery effort had been a complete success
- C. The discovery led directly to the immediate downlisting of the species under Canadian law
- D. The discovery showed that the wood bison were no longer at risk from any kind of disease

D. The population stayed at approximately 250 animals for the entire twentieth century

25. (Open-Response)

Use information from the article AND Graphic Text 2 to explain how long it took for the wood bison population to grow from fewer than 250 animals to more than 10,000 animals. Include at least TWO specific events in your answer.

(Write your response in the space provided.)

26. Why does the author MOST LIKELY end the article with the sentence "That, conservationists say, is what patient work over a hundred years can do"?

- A. To emphasize that the recovery happened slowly, over generations of careful work
- B. To suggest that scientists should now focus on faster recovery methods for other species
- C. To prove that the Canadian government has been the main reason for the recovery's success
- D. To remind readers that the recovery is now complete and the wood bison is fully safe

27. (Open-Response)

The article says that "the wood bison is not entirely safe" and lists several ongoing threats. Why is it important for the article to mention these threats? Use details from the article to support your answer.

(Write your response in the space provided.)

29. Read the sentence:

The volunteers arrived at the community garden early ____ they wanted to finish planting the new seedlings before the heat of the afternoon.

Which word BEST completes the sentence?

- A. unless
- B. however
- C. because
- D. although

30. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. The group of young volunteers from the local school are weeding the front beds today
- B. The group of young volunteers from the local school is weeding the front beds today
- C. The group of young volunteers from the local school were weeding the front beds today
- D. The group of young volunteers from the local school have been weeding the front beds today

31. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A. Although the morning was cool we still planted, the tomatoes the peppers and the beans
- B. Although, the morning was cool we still planted the tomatoes, the peppers and the beans
- C. Although the morning was cool we still planted the tomatoes the peppers and the beans
- D. Although the morning was cool, we still planted the tomatoes, the peppers, and the beans

32. Which sentence uses an apostrophe correctly?

- A. The women's gardening club met in the community centre last Saturday afternoon at two
- B. The womens gardening club met in the community centre last Saturday afternoon at two
- C. The womens' gardening club met in the community centre last Saturday afternoon at two
- D. The women's' gardening club met in the community centre last Saturday afternoon at two

Part 2: Short Writing Responses (Questions 33-35)

33. (Open-Response)

WRITING SESSION B

Time: Approximately 35 minutes

Part 1: Language Conventions (Questions 37-40)

37. Which sentence is a complete sentence (not a fragment or run-on)?

- A. Walking slowly through the long grass beside the river at the edge of the forest that morning
- B. The biologist quietly observed the wood bison herd from a small wooden platform that morning
- C. Although the morning had been cold and the volunteers were tired by the end of the day
- D. The wind rose the leaves scattered the volunteers gathered their tools and walked indoors

38. Read the sentence:

By the time the volunteers reached the garden gate, the rain ____ for nearly an hour.

Which phrase BEST completes the sentence?

- A. is falling
- B. falls
- C. will fall
- D. had been falling

39. Which sentence contains a spelling error?

- A. The community gathered to celebrate the opening of the brand-new community garden
- B. The students worked diligently on their reports about Canadian wildlife recovery efforts
- C. The chef carefully prepared a beautifull meal for the visiting government officials
- D. The athletes practised every morning to prepare for the upcoming championship game

40. Read the sentence:

The volunteers prepared the soil very carefully, ____ they wanted the seedlings to have the best possible chance of growing.

Which word BEST completes the sentence?

Which word BEST completes the sentence?

- A. who
- B. whom
- C. that
- D. whose

45. Which sentence uses quotation marks correctly?

- A. "Have you finished weeding the garden bed asked Dad from the back porch yesterday"
- B. "Have you finished weeding the garden bed?" asked Dad from the back porch yesterday.
- C. Have you finished weeding the garden bed "asked Dad from the back porch yesterday"
- D. "Have you finished weeding the garden bed, asked Dad from the back porch yesterday"

Part 4: Extended Writing Prompts (Questions 46-47)

46. (Extended Writing — Opinion)

Some people believe that all Grade 6 students should be required to do a certain number of hours of community volunteer work each year — for example, helping at a community garden, library, food bank, or neighbourhood event. Other people believe that volunteer work should always be a free choice, not a requirement.

What do you think?

Write a response in which you:

- Clearly state your opinion
- Give at least TWO reasons that support your opinion
- Explain each reason with specific examples or details
- Briefly acknowledge an opposing view
- End with a strong concluding thought

(Aim for approximately four paragraphs.)

focuses on what to do next. The other options misread her response as hidden anger, a volunteer policy, or hope of departure.

4. D — Ms. Korenblum's mint observation — "a weed in the wrong garden and a treasure in the right one" — reveals that she sees gardening as a craft of judgement and context, not fixed rules. What counts as a weed depends on where it grows. The other options misread the line as removal plan, universal advice, or repetition rule.

5. B — The compost bin's history — in that exact spot since 1987 — tells Téa that the garden has a long history she is now becoming part of. Ms. Korenblum is quietly inviting her into that continuity. The other options misread the detail as making her feel small, predicting a replacement, or boasting tenure.

6. C — "You learn the plant. There is no other way" teaches Téa that real gardening knowledge comes from careful, ongoing attention to each plant — not from a shortcut. The line characterizes the craft as slow and observational. The other options misread the line as a labelling claim, a book recommendation, or a notebook suggestion.

7. A — Ms. Korenblum's decision to leave Téa alone with the tomato row on the fifth Saturday shows she believes Téa is now ready to work without direct supervision. The decision itself is a quiet promotion. The other options misread the moment as fatigue, urgent other work, or a setup to fail.

8. D — Ms. Korenblum's feedback is specific, honest, and balanced — naming two specific errors (two missed side stems on the third plant; the cut on the fifth plant a little too high) and ending with "well done." Her style is direct and informative. The other options misread the feedback as dishonesty, departure-preparation, or reluctance to compliment.

9. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *Téa changes from an uncertain new volunteer into someone who can work confidently on her own. On her first Saturday, she stood in the corner of the garden for almost two minutes before she crouched down, and she ended up pulling a small carrot top because she could not tell weeds from parsley. Over five weeks, she learned to ask questions, learned to identify plants by name (including purslane and mint), learned how to layer the compost bin, and learned how to prune tomato plants. By the fifth Saturday, Téa was trusted to prune an entire row of tomatoes by herself — and Ms. Korenblum told her that she "asked the right questions," "remembered what she was told," and "was careful."* (Strong: clear before/after change + multiple specific details.)

10. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *Téa's thought reveals that she has learned something quiet but important — that real skill is earned slowly, through careful attention and patient practice. She had begun the summer unable to tell a weed from a parsley plant, and she ended it pruning an entire row of tomatoes that Ms. Korenblum examined and approved. She had not become a gardener overnight, but she had become trustworthy with a specific job — and Ms. Korenblum had told her that she had the three things a gardener needs: she asks the right questions, she remembers, and she is careful. Téa has learned that becoming good at something is a kind of slow beginning, not a single moment.* (Strong: clear interpretation + text evidence.)

11. D — A list poem (also called a catalogue poem) is built from a series of short, related items that accumulate to make their own meaning. The note above the poem makes the form explicit, and the

structure — "How to tell a weed from a parsley plant. / How to hold a hand trowel..." — confirms it. The other options describe forms that do not match (no hidden acrostic word, no ballad story, no 5-7-5 haiku pattern).

12. A — The poem's central message is that small lessons learned over a summer can add up to something meaningful and worth keeping. The closing line "I am keeping all of them" makes this explicit. The other options misread the message as a list-keeping rule, a claim about gardening specifically, or a complaint about adult teaching.

13. C — The lines characterize the speaker as someone who has learned that admitting you do not know something — out loud — is part of how you learn it. The progression is admit → learn → know. The other options misread the lines as criticism, a career plan, or regret about questions.

14. B — The line "These are not the things I thought I would learn this summer" simply observes that the lessons learned were different from the lessons expected. The next line — "But they are the things I learned" — neither celebrates nor mourns the difference. The other options misread the line as a prior list, disappointment, or a hope for next summer.

15. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Both pieces honour the small, slow learning that happens when a young person works with an older adult. In "The Saturday Garden," Téa spends five Saturdays learning to identify weeds, layer compost, and prune tomatoes under the careful, patient teaching of Ms. Korenblum — earning, by the fifth week, the small praise that she "asks the right questions" and "is careful." In "Small Things That Counted," the speaker lists the things she learned over a summer — including "how to tell a weed from a parsley plant," "the name purslane," and "how to admit, out loud, that I do not know something / and then learn what it is, and then know it." Both pieces honour the value of small lessons that add up slowly into real understanding. (Strong: clear similarity + evidence from both texts.)*

16. A — The article's central purpose is to tell the story of how the wood bison has recovered from near extinction in Canada — from fewer than 250 animals in 1900 to more than 10,000 today, with all the setbacks and partnerships along the way. Every section supports this story. The other options misread the purpose as a comparison, a tourism pitch, or a park-expansion argument.

17. D — The "fewer than 250" detail establishes how close the species came to extinction, so the recovery to more than 10,000 a century later feels meaningful. This is a common framing move in conservation writing. The other options misread the detail as a counting critique, an Indigenous-knowledge dismissal, or an import explanation.

18. B — The article states directly that "in 1922, the Canadian government took an important step. It established Wood Buffalo National Park — a protected area in northern Alberta and the southern Northwest Territories that contained the last known wild wood bison population." This is the first key protective action. The other options confuse the order of events (1957 discovery, 1925 transport, 2014 downlisting).

19. C — The article explains that the 1925 transport of plains bison was a serious mistake because the plains bison "interbred with the smaller wood bison population — and also brought diseases, including

tuberculosis and brucellosis, that the wood bison had no resistance to." The other options invent reasons (food competition, cold-weather mortality, prairie endangerment) the article does not support.

20. A — The 1957 discovery was a turning point because the herd of about two hundred animals found in the Nyarling River area was genetically pure — wood bison that had not interbred with plains bison or been exposed to the diseases. From these animals, biologists carefully built up new herds. The other options misread the discovery as recovery confirmation, the downlisting cause, or full disease safety.

21. D — The sentence communicates that the wood bison's recovery has restored a long-standing connection between the species and Indigenous peoples — the Dene, Cree, Inuvialuit and others whose territories overlap with the bison's historical range. The "relationship" in the sentence refers to that connection. The other options misread the line as a land-reclamation claim, an all-Indigenous-management claim, or a ranking of stories.

22. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Wood bison currently live in five main locations across northern Canada, according to the map. The article describes herds in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories, in northern British Columbia, in Yukon, and in Manitoba. The map shows the largest herd in Wood Buffalo National Park, on the border between northern Alberta and the southern Northwest Territories, and a second herd in the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary in the central Northwest Territories. Additional herds exist in northern British Columbia (the Nordquist herd), southern Yukon (the Aishihik herd), and northwestern Manitoba (the Chitek Lake herd) — all within the species' historical boreal-forest range. (Strong: claim + multiple specific herds from both sources.)*

23. C — Graphic Text 2 shows the plotted line rising past 10,000 by 2020 — matching the article's claim that "more than ten thousand wood bison live across the species' modern range." The other options misread the chart by confusing 2020 with 1900 (250), 1980 (2,000), or 1922 (500).

24. B — The graph shows the population starting at approximately 250 in 1900, rising slowly through the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, and then accelerating after the 1957 discovery — reaching about 2,000 by 1980, about 5,000 by 2000, and more than 10,000 by 2020. The pattern is slow at first, then faster. The other options misread the pace as quick early recovery, decline after a peak, or stagnation.

25. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *The wood bison population took roughly a hundred years to grow from fewer than 250 to more than 10,000. According to the article, the species was on the edge of disappearance in 1900, and the recovery began when Wood Buffalo National Park was established in 1922 to protect the last known wild population. A herd of pure wood bison was discovered in the Nyarling River area in 1957, and biologists carefully used these animals to build up new herds across northern Canada. The line graph shows that the population reached about 2,000 by 1980 and about 5,000 by 2000, and the species was downlisted from threatened to special concern in 2014. By recent counts, the population has passed 10,000. (Strong: claim + multiple specific events from both sources.)*

26. A — The closing sentence emphasizes that the recovery happened slowly, over a hundred years of careful, patient work — by governments, biologists, and Indigenous communities. The line honours the time the work took. The other options misread the closing as a call for faster methods, a credit claim, or a declaration of completion.

27. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Mentioning the ongoing threats is important because it gives readers an honest picture of the recovery. The article explains that the largest herd in Wood Buffalo National Park is still affected by the tuberculosis and brucellosis brought into the population in 1925, and that climate change is altering the boreal forest while new roads and industrial activity continue to fragment habitat. By including these complications, the article avoids suggesting that the species is now fully safe and reminds readers that conservation is ongoing work. This makes the recovery feel more realistic — a "recovery, not a finish."* (Strong: clear interpretation + text evidence.)

28. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *The wood bison — the largest land animal in North America — had been reduced to fewer than 250 surviving animals by 1900 because of overhunting and habitat disturbance, and the species nearly disappeared from Canada. Over the following century, Wood Buffalo National Park, the 1957 discovery of a pure herd in the Nyarling River area, and careful work by biologists and Indigenous communities helped grow the population to more than 10,000 animals across five main herds. The story shows what patient conservation work over a hundred years can accomplish.* (Strong: captures main ideas + uses specific detail + own words.)

29. C — "Because" introduces a cause-and-effect relationship — the volunteers arrived early *because* they wanted to finish planting before the afternoon heat. This is the only conjunction that fits the meaning. "Unless" signals condition, "however" signals contrast, and "although" signals concession — none of which match the cause-and-effect relationship.

30. B — The subject is "group" (singular collective noun), so the singular verb "is weeding" is correct. Options A, C, and D use plural verbs that incorrectly agree with the closer noun "volunteers" rather than the actual subject "group." Collective nouns like "group," "team," and "class" are treated as singular in standard usage.

31. D — Option D correctly uses a comma after the introductory dependent clause ("Although the morning was cool,") and commas to separate three items in a list ("the tomatoes, the peppers, and the beans"). Options A, B, and C either omit needed commas or scatter them incorrectly throughout the sentence.

32. A — "Women" is already plural without an "s," so the possessive form is "women's" — adding 's after the irregular plural. Option B omits the apostrophe entirely. Option C incorrectly places the apostrophe after "womens." Option D adds an unnecessary extra apostrophe. This follows the same rule as "men's," "children's," and "geese's" — irregular plurals form possessives by adding 's.

33. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Last spring, my older brother and I volunteered at a community garden in Edmonton for the first time. We spent every Saturday morning learning how to plant seeds and how to identify different types of weeds. It was one of the most enjoyable experiences I have had outside of school this year.* (Three errors fixed: "my older brother and me" → "my older brother and I"; "edmonton" and "saturday" → "Edmonton" and "Saturday"; "enjoyible" → "enjoyable.")

34. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *As the sun rose slowly above the boreal forest and the morning mist lifted off the long grass, the wood bison began to move toward the river.* (Strong: combines all three ideas using subordination, flows smoothly, paints a coherent scene.)

35. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Last year I tried indoor rock climbing for the first time at a community centre near my school. Before I started, my hands were sweating so much that I had to wipe them twice on my pants just to hold the chalk bag, and I kept staring up at the wall thinking about how high it looked from the floor. The instructor showed me how to clip into the rope and how to test it before I left the ground, and once I was actually climbing the wall did not feel as tall as it had looked from below.* (Strong: specific new activity, specific pre-activity feeling, sensory detail.)

36. Extended Writing — Sample Level 3 response benchmark: A strong narrative response builds around one small, specific skill — pruning, kneading, casting a fishing line, tying a knot, identifying a plant or animal, fixing a small object — taught by an adult outside the writer's family. Strong responses describe the careful, patient learning process inside a specific scene and close with a quiet reflection on what was different afterward. Length: approximately three to five paragraphs. The strongest responses earn the word "learned" through patient, specific action rather than dramatic statement.

37. B — Option B has a clear subject ("The biologist"), a verb ("observed"), and a complete thought. Option A is a fragment (no main subject/verb). Option C is a fragment (a dependent clause alone). Option D is a run-on (three independent clauses fused without proper punctuation).

38. D — The sentence describes an action that had been ongoing before another past event ("By the time the volunteers reached the garden gate"). This requires the past perfect continuous tense, "had been falling." Options A, B, and C use present, simple present, or future tenses that do not match the past-before-past time relationship signalled by the sentence.

39. C — "Beautiful" is misspelled; the correct spelling is "beautiful" with a single "l." The other three sentences contain no spelling errors. This is a commonly misspelled word at the Grade 6 level because doubling the "l" looks plausible but is incorrect.

40. A — "Because" introduces a cause-and-effect relationship — the volunteers prepared the soil carefully *because* they wanted the seedlings to have the best chance of growing. This is the only conjunction that fits the meaning. "Unless" signals condition, "although" signals concession, and "however" signals contrast — none of which match the cause-and-effect relationship.

41. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Neither the head gardener nor the volunteers were prepared for the unexpected hailstorm that arrived that afternoon.* (Two corrections: "or" → "nor" (the correct pairing with "neither"); "was" → "were" (in "neither/nor" constructions, the verb agrees with the subject closer to it; "volunteers" is closer and plural, so the verb must be plural).)

42. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *The morning mist finally lifted just after sunrise. The wood bison began to graze along the river, and the volunteers watched quietly from the wooden platform above the long grass.* (Strong: run-on split cleanly into two complete sentences while preserving the full meaning.)

43. D — Option D correctly capitalizes "July" (month), "Wood Buffalo National Park" (proper park name), and "Alberta" (proper province name), while leaving "family" and "northern" lowercase (common noun and directional adjective, respectively). Option A fails to capitalize "Wood Buffalo National Park"

and "Alberta" and incorrectly capitalizes "Family." Option B fails to capitalize "July" and "Alberta." Option C fails to capitalize "Wood Buffalo National Park."

44. C — "That" is the correct relative pronoun for referring to things — the garden tools *that* Ms. Korenblum cleaned. "Who" and "whom" refer to people, and "whose" indicates possession. "That" is the only correct choice when referring to a non-human noun like garden tools.

45. B — Option B correctly punctuates dialogue: opening quotation marks, the question mark inside the closing quotation marks before the speaker tag, and a period at the end of the sentence. Options A, C, and D either omit quotation marks, misplace them, or fail to handle the punctuation around the speaker tag correctly.

46. Extended Writing — Sample Level 3 response benchmark: A strong opinion response takes a clear stand (required volunteer hours OR voluntary participation OR a balanced position) in the opening paragraph, develops at least two well-reasoned arguments in body paragraphs with specific examples (skill-building, community connection, personal autonomy, time pressure, meaningful service versus forced service), briefly acknowledges an opposing view, and closes with a thoughtful concluding sentence. Length: approximately four paragraphs. Wandering between both sides without committing loses marks on Ideas.

47. Extended Writing — Sample Level 3 response benchmark: A strong series-of-paragraphs response introduces a specific Canadian wild animal in the opening paragraph and explains how the writer first learned about it, develops at least two specific interesting features in separate body paragraphs with concrete detail, and closes with a reflection on what the animal helps the writer understand about Canada or nature. Length: approximately four paragraphs. The strongest responses pick a focused, specific animal — including smaller or less famous species — and let genuine interest drive the writing.